

NEWS

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Trenton Man Sentenced to 200 Months in Prison for Conviction as an Armed Career Criminal

(More)

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TRENTON – A Trenton man was sentenced today to 200 months in federal prison for his conviction as an armed career criminal on a one-count Indictment charging possession of a firearm by a previously convicted felon, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

U.S. District Judge Anne E. Thompson also ordered Thomas Weatherly, 57, to serve 5 years of supervised release.

On Sept. 8, 2006, after 1 hour of deliberation, a jury convicted Weatherly on the charge contained in the Indictment. Weatherly was convicted as an armed career criminal and as such faced a mandatory minimum prison term of 15 years.

During Weatherly's sentencing hearing, Assistant U.S. Attorney Peter Katz told the court that Weatherly has 15 prior felony convictions, including a murder conviction for which he was sentenced to prison for 30 years and several home invasion burglaries for which he served an addition 15 years in state prison.

Weatherly was arrested on August 31, 2005 by police officers with the Trenton Police Department and remained in state custody up to the date of his conviction. Weatherly has been held in federal custody since his conviction.

According to trial evidence and the testimony of several Trenton police officers, officers were on foot patrol in the area of Cuyler and Gladstone Avenues when a male, later identified as Weatherly, was observed sitting on the ground drinking "Mad Dog 20/20," an alcoholic beverage. After obtaining the defendant's identity, a warrant check revealed an active Trenton municipal warrant for Weatherly's arrest. While assisting the defendant up off the ground, a black handgun was spotted and recovered from the Weatherly's waistband. Weatherly was taken into custody without incident.

In determining the actual sentence, Judge Thompson consulted the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Christie credited Police Officers with the Trenton Police Department, under the direction of Director Joseph Santiago, and the Mercer County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of Prosecutor Joseph L. Bocchini Jr., for their investigative work.

The Government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Peter Katz, of the U.S. Attorney's Criminal Division in Trenton.

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Defense Attorney: Lisa Van Hoeck_Esq. Asst. Fed. Public Defender